

Ornithological Literature

Edited by Sara R. Morris

THE BIRD ALMANAC: THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO ESSENTIAL FACTS AND FIGURES OF THE WORLD'S BIRDS. By David M. Bird. Firefly Books, Buffalo, New York. 1999: 460 pp., 17 unnumbered black and white illustrations, numerous unnumbered tables. \$19.95 (paper), \$65.00 (cloth).—In a single volume, David Bird has compiled many of the facts and figures about birds and provided resources for those who study birds. The book is divided into sections that will be useful to professional ornithologists, including anatomy, physiology, reproduction, mortality, threatened and endangered species, resources for professional ornithologists, and a world checklist of birds. Additional sections will have appeal to bird enthusiasts, including American and British equivalencies for names of birds, mascot birds, bird-watching, attracting birds to the backyard, who's who in ornithology and conservation, resources for bird lovers, and record holders. Each section has a surprising amount of information. For example, the section on reproduction includes tables of territory sizes, song repertoire sizes, time of initiation of singing, number of sperm storage tubules, duration of sperm storage, clutch size, incubation period, incubation times, and sex ratios; descriptions of nest types and patterns of development; and illustrations of gametes, eggs, and embryonic development. Anyone teaching classes about birds will have a variety of interesting facts and useful illustrations to use in the classroom. Bird has included extensive citations for the information he presents, allowing anyone interested in learning more about a particular topic to read the original source for additional details.

The resources included in the book for bird watchers and ornithologists are equally impressive. Bird has compiled traditional resources like contact information for bird-related societies, contact information for scientific journals and bird magazines, addresses for bird banding organizations, rare bird alert numbers (and web addresses), annotated lists

of CD-ROMs and software, and lists of bird videos and sound recordings. Ornithologists will find contact information for sources of optical equipment, sound-recording equipment, telemetry gear, banding supplies and equipment, organizations that provide DNA sexing, and specialized video equipment. There are also extensive on-line references like internet links to world-wide birding web sites, addresses of bird-watching and ornithological discussion groups, and subscription information for bird related e-mail lists.

As with any volume of this magnitude, there are inaccuracies and oversights. For example, the illustration of the bird skeleton has labeled the tarsometatarsus as the tarsus, and it does not label the sternum but does label the keel. In a number of the tables, only the common name is given, even when numerous species have the same general name (e.g., crow, blackbird, or magpie).

With the wealth of information packed into this book, it will provide a wonderful resource for both professionals and amateurs. Ornithologists and bird enthusiasts should both consider this book for their libraries.—SARA R. MORRIS.

ENDEMIC BIRD AREAS OF THE WORLD: PRIORITIES FOR BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION. By Alison J. Stattersfield, Michael J. Crosby, Adrian J. Long, and David C. Wege. Bird Life International, Cambridge. 1998: 846 pp., 120 maps covering major areas of avian endemism and several hundred tabulations. \$60.00 (paper).—This remarkable work documents, in great detail, all the major endemic bird areas of the world. Detailed maps show basic physiography and features. The species tabulations cover global status, where each rare species occurs, its altitudinal range, and details of habitat. Over 300 contributors combined to produce the data sets. There are several dozen habitat photos.

Each endemic bird area is individually ex-